

Japanese American History

Since 1868, when the first Japanese immigrants came to the United States, they have had to endure many trials and tribulations in their pursuit of the American Dream. Often judged and discriminated against, Japanese Americans have had to overcome school segregation, internment camps, and more. Although Japanese Americans have come a long way when it comes to being treated fairly and recognized as Americans, their struggle still continues today.

1868

First group of 143 Japanese arrived in Hawaii to work for a sugar cane plantation. Working conditions were harsh, with difficult 10-hour workdays, and monthly wages of four dollars, 50% of which were withheld by plantation owners. These conditions led 40 of the workers to return to Japan before their contract ended (Easton & Ellington, 2014).



Courtesy of Bishop Museum

1886

The Japanese government legalized immigration to the United States. This came about from the Meiji Restoration where Emperor Meiji rapidly industrialized and adopted Western ideas and production methods ("Personal Justice Denied", 1983).



<https://ja.wikipedia.org>

1901

Between 1901 and 1908, 127,000 Japanese entered the United States. In this period, large amounts of Japanese immigrated to Hawaii and the Western Coast of the United States as the West Coast was the most accessible when traveling from Japan to the United States ("History of Japanese Americans", 2021).



Courtesy of Underwood Archives

1906

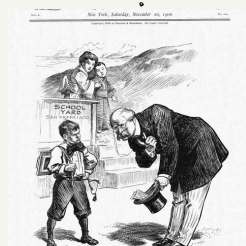
The sharp increase in Japanese immigrants, gave rise to anti-Japanese sentiments which lead the San Francisco School Board to order segregating Japanese American students. Ninety-three students with Japanese ancestry were ordered to attend a school already set up for Chinese immigrant students (Easton & Ellington, 2014).



<http://aznampopculture.blogspot.com/>

1907

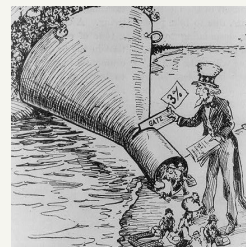
Japan was outraged with the segregation, which lead President Roosevelt to negotiate the Gentleman's Agreement where Japan would stop issuing valid passports to the U.S. in exchange for an end to Japanese school segregation (Easton & Ellington, 2014).



<https://immigrationhistory.org/item/gentlemen-agreement/>

1924

The Immigration Act of 1924 was passed which effectively ended all Japanese immigration into the United States. With no new Japanese immigrants, all Japanese Americans born after 1924 were, by definition, born in the US. This resulted in unusually well-defined generational groups in Japanese Americans ("History of Japanese Americans", 2021).



<https://reimaginingmigration.org/the-1924-immigration-act/>

1942

Following the Pearl Harbor bombing, the U.S. forcibly placed an estimated 120,000 Japanese Americans/nationals in internment camps. Detainees lived in barracks and several families were housed together, with each camp acting like a small town ("Japanese Internment Camps", 2009).



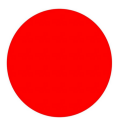
<https://www.recorder.com/APNewsBreak-Bones-may-be-remains-of-lost-Japanese-internee-29623331>

1965

The Immigration Act of 1965 was passed which ended 40 years of ban on Japanese Immigration ("History of Japanese Americans", 2021).



<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2020/03/24/820181127/the-unlikely-story-behind-japanese-americans-campaign-for-reparations>



References

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